GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:698
ANSWERED ON:22.10.2008
MANDATORY TESTING OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED PACKED FOOD
Reddy Shri Mekapati Rajamohan

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) under the administrative control of his Ministry has ordered for mandatory testing of Genetically Modified Packed Food being sold in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the steps taken to ensure safety assessment of such packed food;

(c) whether such safety assessments are subject to public scrutiny;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) & (b) No Sir. However, approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC), the statutory body constituted under the 'Rules for the Manufacture, Use /Import /Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms / Genetically Engineering Organisms or Cells, 1989' notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, is mandatory prior to commercial use o f genetically modified organisms and products derived therefrom. The GEAC is following a case by case system of approvals for which extensive rules and guidelines have been framed for evaluating their environmental and health safety. As of date, the GEAC has approved the environmental release of only Bt cotton in India. The GEAC had received request only for import and commercial use of GM Soybean oil in India which was granted during July 2007. No other request has been received so far.

(c)& (d) The results of the biosafety studies including toxicity and allergenicity data of all commercially released genetically modified crops are available in the public domain at www.envfor.nic.in and www.igmoris.nic.in. Stakeholder comments are taken into consideration prior to their commercial release.

(e) Does not arise.